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ABSTRACT

The Urban Job Center for Women and Parent Outreach Center in East Brunswick, New Jersey, provides services to adult women and single parents. At the Center, adult women are assisted in developing an individualized career plan. The career plan is tailored to meet the needs of the client as determined by assessment and counseling interviews. For some women, training is appropriate and arrangements are made for them to learn a skill. For other women, possible career plans may include on-the-job training, apprentice training, or job placement. Women are presented with all the available options, both traditional and nontraditional, as they develop their career plans. It is common for the Center to provide support counseling as the client implements her career plan, and to provide information and linkage to support services offered through community social service agencies. Since the Center opened in November 1984, 374 persons have used these free services. During fiscal year 1985, the Women's Job Center served 252 people, 98 percent of them women. One hundred and four clients entered vocational training programs, 135 entered employment, and an additional 13 are receiving intensive career planning services. A total of 239 clients attained job readiness by the end of fiscal year 1985, and 85 percent are now working. In order to stress the options available to females in today's labor market, meetings are held with parent groups, and speakers are available. The Urban Job Center for Women and Parent Outreach Center provides women with the opportunity to emerge from the limited occupational areas in which they have historically been entrenched. (A three-page bibliography is appended.) (Author/KC)

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ED278789

FINAL REPORT

OF

THE URBAN JOB CENTER FOR WOMEN

AND

PARENT OUTREACH CENTER

GRANT # M1SL02004686

1985 - 1986

MIDDLESEX COUNTY VOCATIONAL & TECHNICAL HIGH SCHOOLS AND

ADULT TECHNICAL SCHOOLS

112 RUES LANE

EAST BRUNSWICK, NEW JERSEY 08816

(201) 257-3300

SUPERINTENDENT: DR. J. HENRY ZANZALARI

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U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
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This project report herein was conducted pursuant to a contract from the New Jersey Department of Education, Division of Vocational Education and Career Preparation. It was funded under Section_____ of Public Law 94-482.

Project Duration: July 1, 1985
Beginning Date

June 30, 1986
Ending Date

The Contractors undertaking this project were encouraged to express fully their judgements in professional and technical matters. Points of view or opinions do not, therefore, necessarily represent official funding agency positions or policies.

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PROJECT TITLE: The Urban Job Center for Women and Parent Outreach Center

LEGAL NAME OF APPLICANT DISTRICT, INSTITUTION OR AGENCY: Middlesex County Vocational-Technical Schools

ADDRESS: 112 Rues Lane

East Brunswick, NJ 08816

PROJECT DIRECTOR: Dr. Karen McCloud

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(AREA CODE)

ABSTRACT

DESCRIPTION OF PROJECT

(Use this sheet and no more than one other to type in single-spaced form a statement of project objectives, procedures that were followed, state and local priorities emphasized and the expected contribution of the project to vocational education.)

(attached)

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ABSTRACT

Women comprise over 50% of the national labor force. Yet, their perticipation has been limited to few occupational areas. The majority of women are employed in three occupational areas: clerical, service and professional/technical. Typically women reamin at the lower levels of these occupations which result in low paying, often dead-end careers. Yet, in two-parent households, two paychecks are often required to make ends meet. In single-parent households, that one paycheck is crucial to the survival of the family, and an increasing number of households are headed by women who earn a median income of $7,000 a year.

The Urban Job Center for women and Parent Outreach Center is designed to heop reverse this trend both now and for future generations. In general, services are provided to two groups: Adult Women and Parents.

At the Center, adult women are assisted to develop an individualized career plan. This career plan is tailored to meet the needs of the client as determined by assessment and counseling interviews. For some women, training is appropriate and arrangements are made for them to learn a skill. For other women, possible career plans may include on-the-job training, apprentice training or job placement. Women are presented with all the available options as they develop their career plan, both traditional and non-traditional options.

The individualized career plan addresses the whole person, meeting the client where they are in their personal and career development. It is common for the Center to provide support counseling as the client implements their career plan, and to provide information and linkage to support services offered through community social service agencies.

Since the Center opened in November, 1984, 374 individuals have availed themselves of these free services. During fiscal year 1985 (July 1, 1985 - June 30, 1986) the Woemn's Job Center served 252 people. Of those people, 248 (98.41%) were women and 41.59%) were men. One hundred and four clients or(41%) entered vocational training programs, and one-hundred thirty-five or (54%) entered employment. An additional 13 or (5%) are receiving intensive career planning services. A total of 239 clients attained job readiness bv the end of FY'85. Of those, 203 or 85% are now working.

In order to stress the options available to females in todays labor market, meetings are held with parent groups. Presentations emphasize the appropriateness of both sexes to enter careers of their choice and to disregard the stereotypes of the past. Speakers are available to anv interested parent organization such as PTA's and PTO's.

The Urban Job Center for Women and Parent Outreach Center provides a vital service to the community. It provides women with the opportunity to emerge from the limited occupational areas which they have historicallv held.

PROBLEM

The perticipation of women in the labor force more than doubled during the twentieth century. Women comprised 20 percent of the national work force in 1900; 40.7 percent in 1976 (Reider, 1977); and 52.9 percent in 1981 (U.S. Department of Labor, 1981).

Despite the apparent gains in the number of women employed, their participation in the labor force has been limited to few occupational areas. The majority of women are employed in three occupational areas: clerical, service and professional and technical (Reider, 1977; U.S. Department of La bor, 1981; Weinheimer, 1978). Current participation rates published by the U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics (1981) indicate that 35 percent of all females are clerical workers; 19 percent are service workers; and 17 percent are professionals or technicians. In contrast, only 2 percent of employed women are craft workers and only 7 percent are nonfarm managers and administrators.

According to Blaxall and Reagan (1976), women tend to be segregated into certain female occupations which deny women with skills and ability the opportunity to participate fully in the workplace. The overall pervasive effect of occupations sex segregation is that women are concentrated in relatively few occupations which are low paying and they remain at the lower levels of those occupations (Blaxall & Reagan, 1976; Cahn, 1977; Reagan, 1977).

"The major problem of occupational sex segregation has, to a certain extend, been traced to the question of job preparation and training" (Vetter, Sechler, Lowry & Canora, 1979, p.10). This concept is supported by Kane and Frazee (1978); Kievit (1972); Reider (1977); Steiger and Cooper (1975); and Weinheimer (1978).

Females tend to enter courses such as cosmetology, health or business while males enroll in auto mechanics, plumbing, welding and the like.

Enrollment data vocational area collected by the Federal Office for Civil Rights in 1979 showed that women were 84 percent of the rollees in health occupations, 79 percent of those in consumer and homemaking programs, 82 percent of those in occupational home economics and 73 percent of those in office occupations. Men constituted about 80 percent of the agricultural, technical, and trades and industrial students and almost 90 percent of students in industrial art (Wells, 1981). These statistics clearly indicate that females enter stereotypical occupations for their sex.

While attention has focused on attempts to eliminate sex role stereotyping and sex bias in vocational education since the passage of Title II of the Vocational Amendments of 1976, little progress has been made in the number of females enrolled in non-traditional vocational programs. Beuke (1981) reported that only 5.9 percent of female vocational students were enrolled in male intensive programs in 1976.

If females are to receive equal opportunity in the world of work, vocational programs must prepare females for a broader range of occupations. In order to bring about this needed change, stronger efforts must be made to recruit and train females in trade and technical careers. One such effort addressed by this proposal is the recruitment of adult females to be trained in non-traditional areas. Since adults have already proceeded through the adolescent development stages dealing with their self-concept and sex roles, they are more apt to explore occupations non-traditional for their sex. Further, non-traditional occupations are higher paying occupations and, therefore, serve as an incentive for women supporting themselves and their children.

Since research studies indicate that females have more trouble than males of the same age in deciding who they are vocationally (Bardwick, 1971; Burkhart, 1973; Durking, 1971; Rosen & Aneshensel, 1978), it is important to also address the issue of encouraging young females to explore career options non-traditional for their gender. Since the influence of "significant others" strongly affects decisions made regarding career choice, it is necessary to reach those who influence our youth. Parents have had a major influence in guiding their children to career choices. In many cases parents lack up-to-date information as to what vocational careers and/or programs are available and appropriate.

Parents and guardians, therefore, must be educated on such topics as career options, employment trends and the role of women in the labor force. This vocational information data should be provided to parents and guardians while their child is in the elementary and high school grades so that they can better guide their child's career preparation during and after high school. For this reason, the Job Center will also offer parent outreach services. The parent outreach components will provide parents/guardians and other interested adults, within Middlesex County with information pertinent to be placed on stimulating interest in occupational areas non-traditional for one's gender.

RELATED RESEARCH

The vocational development of females entails unique considerations. Educators have tended to regard the vocational role of females as homemaking or in narrow career areas, namely, nursing, teaching and clerical field. Women are obviously a valuable resource in the world of work, a resource that has largely remained untapped or poorly utilized. A variety of reasons can be offered for this situation. The prime cause is perhaps traceable to the vocational guidance of females framed by antiquated vocational stereotypes and adolescent expectations of the larger culture (Laughran, 1975; Thomas & Steward, 1971).

The unique vocational considerations that apply to women are reinforced by Bailyn (1964), who points out that girls must make a choice that boys do not have to make, the choice of whether or not to work at all. What is generally an unquestioned course for men involves considerable choice anxiety for women. Only after a girl has decided that she will include work in her life style can realistic vocational choice commence.

It has been increasingly clear that career development theories which emenate from studies of largely middle class, male subjects are inadequate to explain the career development of women (Psathas, 1968; Vecter. 1970).

Recognizing this fact, some tentative notions regarding the work life of women, their unique development stages, their patterns of vocational participation, and the determinants of the patterns have been formulated, but much research is still needed.

The occupational behavior or women has not been treated comprehensively in the counseling literature, largely because women as workers have been preceived as individually transient and collectively insignificant due to the type and level of jobs available to them in society. There are, however, factors that have affected the vocational behavior in women. These factors are related to the socialization process of women.

Occupational sex stereotyping occurs early in the socialization of children. Scholssberg and Goodman (1972) studied children's sex stereotyping of occupations. They found that kindergarteners and sixth graders felt that a woman's place was clearly not fixing cars or television sets or designing buildings. The children did say that a woman could work as a waitress, nurse or librarian. In contrast, they did not feel that men had to be similarly limited.

Gray-Schilberg, Villareal and Stone (1972) studied the resolution of career conflicts by 52 male and 57 female college students and 72 male and 63 females non-college adults.

A significant number of women in the two samples studied were motivated to subordinate their interests to those of a fiance or husband and the men, too, perceived this as the accepted state of affairs. The stereotypes revealed in the subjects' responses reflected strong societal expectations that a women shall be supportive of a man and not seek self-expression through a career. The authors indicated that the removal of economic, political and legal barriers to women's achievement. While important, will probably not significantly affect the occupational status of women unless it is accomplished by a fundamental change in both external and internalized expectations for the "proper" female role.

Suniewick (1971) indicated that changes need to occur in the institutions that educate women, in the world, and in women themselves as they deal with the conflict between career and marriage. She stated that "the obvious finding is that women are not being helped to resolve the conflict; rather they are being asked to accept their roles as wives and mothers and to make their career goals secondary to the other 'natural' functions of women in society" (p.21). She asked how it is possible for a women to freely choose and pursue a career when under-utilization of women, sex labeling of jobs, women's responsibility for children and family, prejudice against women in the world of work, and other cultural limitations continue to hinder women's equal access to work.

She sees little evidence of change occuring in educational institutions to assist women in gaining access to fields of study normally open to men, although the need for professions and vocations to accept qualified women on an equal basis with men has been clearly shown.

Vocational educators must take a leadership role in changing this trend. It is imperative that counseling and job related services deter stereo-typical job-related behavior. The Vocational Education Equity Study commissioned by Congress in 1976 supports this opinion. Results from that study as reported by Wells (1981), indicate "a strong positive correlation between the sex equity activities in a school and the proportion of non-traditional enrollments in vocational courses in that school". Conclusions of the study also indicate that few schools had undertaken these critical activities.

Further, Wells (1981) points out that relatively few states have made significant expenditures to promote equal opportunities at the school level. Much of the activity that has occured has been limited to awareness of bias and stereotypes and has not been designed to recruit women for non-traditional programs to provide them with supportive counseling and to work with industry to place them in jobs.

OBJECTIVES

In order to break the cycle of poverty that so many women especially single heads of household, find themselves in, it is necessary to overcome barriers to access for training and higher paying jobs. This must be done through providing information, exploration of options, career and support counseling, placement and retention in training and jobs. In working toward the goal of improving women's economic stability, the Women's Job Center set down seven objectives;

1. To develop career plans for 200 adult females;
2. To provide employability training to participants in such areas as job search interview skills, self-presentation, etc.;
3. To provide training in some 34 vocational-technical occupational areas;
4. To provide counseling and information in support areas such as housing, financial management, and child care facilities;
5. To provide job placement services participants;
6. To promote to parent groups the accessibility of vocational-technical careers to both males and females;

7. To provide parent and community groups with updated information concerning special programs (i.e. Apprenticeship, JTPA, Gifted and Talented Programs, Nontraditional Training, Cooperative Vocational Education, Work Study, Student Volunteer work, Student Vocational Organizations, Exploratory Vocational Programs, and Technology for Children, etc.)

In FY'86, the Job Center has met those objectives by:

1. Developing career plans with 252 adult females (forms attached).

   All clients were provided with some kind of assessment through interview and such tests as the Career Orientation Placement and Evaluation Survey and the Harrigton-O'Shea Interest Survey.

2. Providing to groups and individuals information and skill development in resume writing, job search techniques, interviewing, self-presentation, and job retention;

3. Providing information about 34 vocational-technical occupational areas and enrolling participants in various courses offered by the five schools including night courses, JTPA courses, and full-time certificate courses;

4. Some of the organizations involved in the support network for clients include the Housing Coalition, Social Services, Family Service Association, Family Day Care Network, Community Mental Health Centers, Women's Health Network, Legal Services, Douglass Advisory Services, and the YWCA of Central Jersey.
5. All job ready clients were given placement assistance. Of the clients who were job ready, 135 are now working.
6. Various information programs were offered to parent and community groups. All 25 sending school districts were invited to the Women's Job Center open house in September and to a special Parent's Night held in Piscataway on October 23.
7. Additional information programs were provided to various community groups (detailed in procedures) and to the general public through the New Brunswick Public Library.

PROCEDURES

The proposal stated "This project will be evaluated in terms of its impact upon the targeted group. The project will be viewed successful if the following are accomplished during the year:

1. Individual progress will be monitored and evaluated according to stated goals of career plan. Changes in the plan will also be evaluated.
2. Hold a minimum of four advisory committee meetings.
3. Recruit a minimum of 200 clients to participate in the project.
4. Accomplish job placement with an 80% success rate of those who are job ready.
5. Publish four newsletters.
6. Run three twelve-week support groups and use pre-and post-assessment tool measure attitude change.
7. Contact all 25 sending school districts in Middlesex County to arrange vocational information programs and make at least ten presentations to school and community groups.
8. Data will be collected through the intake interview form, the career plan and implementation form, and support group assessment tool. Initial evaluation will be made in January.

If participants are not meeting their intended goals, project staff, along with Vocational School Supervisors and advisory board, will reevaluate and pinpoint problem areas. If necessary, new approaches and services will be implemented."

PROCEDURES FOR IMPLEMENTATION WERE AS FOLLOWS:

1. Each client received ongoing counseling and assistance as appropriate to achieve her stated goals. For some it was necessary to rethink goals or to postpone a particular plan because of family or personal problems. What was important in those cases was that because follow-up and an ongoing relationship with the Women's Job Center, those clients did not "fall through the cracks" but resumed their plans once they had resolved their problem.
2. The advisory committee met four times, August 21, November 19, February 19, and April 15. There were some additions and changes. Assembly Schwartz and Dean Voorhees resigned as co-chairs, and at the November meeting Sandy Jones was elected the new chair.

   Because of Mary Hollis's retirement as Director of the Board of Social Services, Angela Mackaronis, the new Director, was added to the Advisory Committee. Joan Harrigan replaced Verna Kilpatrick as representative of the Civil League.

ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Superintendent:	Dr. J. Henry Zanzalari,	Middlesex County Vocational Schools
Chair person:	Sandy Jones,	Women Helping Women
Ex-officio:	Elizabeth Stambolian,	Sex Equity Coordinator
Assemblyman:	David C. Schwartz	
	David Blevins,	Human Resource Coordinator
	Joan Harrigan,	Civic League of Greater N.B.
	Georgia Kampf,	Women's Affirmative Action
	Angela Mackaronis,	Board of Social Services
	Dr. Karen McCloud,	Middlesex County Vocational Schools Equity Services Supervisor
	Ray Peterson,	Middlesex County Central Labor
	Mrs. Betty Street	
	Lydia Trinidad,	Director O.R. Asso. of Human Development
	Rafael Valentin,	Director of Human Services
	Dean Anita Voorhees,	Division of Community Education
	William Waldman,	Human Services

3. Recruitment. Clients were recruited generally by the same means as in FY'85 by: public presentations and workshops, advisory committee contacts, community organizations and agencies, media coverage, brochures, and word-of-mouth.

Clients came at about the same rate as FY'85, but recruitment was somewhat hampered in that there was only one staff person to recruit while the intention was to have two. Because of delay in funding for the Women's Services Specialist (refer to job description page in proposal), the additional staff person was not hired until April. Nevertheless, 137 new clients were added to the previous 115. In addition, a direct mail brochure went to the 10,000+ single heads of household in Middlesex County.

4. Job Placement. A total of 239 clients attained job readiness by the end of FY'85. Of those 203 or 85% are now working.

5. Newsletters. Project and/or Vo-Tech newsletters were published in four editions: Summer 1985, Fall 1985, Winter 1986, and Spring 1986.

6. Support groups. Because the Women's Services Specialist, who was designated to conduct support groups, did not join the project until April, this particular activity had to be restructured. Many women who needed the help of a support group were referred to those that are run by various clinics, the YWCA, and Women Helping Women.

A shorter six-session "mincourse" was offered incorporating job readiness, self-assessment, and the supportive and decision-making components developed for last year's Vocational Growth Opportunities Group.

7. Outreach. All 25 sending school districts were invited both to the September 4 Open House and to the October 23 program "Youth Child and Career Choice." In addition, project staff made presentations to the Network on Adolescent Pregnancy, New Jersey Citizen Action, Project Care, the Adult Learning Center, the Women's Affirmative Action Committee of the Industrial Union Councel, the Labor Association Career Day, and three presentations at the New Brunswick Public Library. Women's Job Center staff participated in various conferences and workshops detailed in Related Activities.

8. Data. Information was collected from individual clients in numerous ways. The intake assessment form generated personal information. Achievement tests were used to collect and measure academic ability. Career and skills surveys provided insight and direction for the clients educational and career plans. A six month evaluation of Women's Job Center clients assessed the individual clients goals and objectives, and made recommendations for improvement. The client follow-up form was used to keep track of clients educational and employment status.

FINDINGS

1. The number of single heads of households, headed by women is increasing. A significant number of these women are unaware of career training and educational opportunities.
2. There are various restraints or barriers, besides the lack of information, that prevents people from taking advantage of opportunities. Most commonly mentioned are difficulty in balancing work and training, need for child care, lack of transportation and personal barriers such as poor self-worth, confusion and fear of failure.
3. Support services are often a necessity for individuals while training for their career or upon initial employment.
4. WJC clients who participated in support group sessions expressed a favorable change in attitude, self worth and their personal employment status.
5. Local and County organizations are not cognizant enough of each other's resources and services.

INTERPRETATION OF FINDING

1. Further search needs to be done to find better ways to provide information about vocational training opportunities. This could be a significant factor in breaking the cycle of poverty and stereptypical job placement. There is no tuition for vocational training which is an incentive to many clients.
2. The availability of support services seems to be the second most important service of the Women's Job Center. One of the support services asked for most are counseling, both short and long term. Clients also express the need for quality day care services. Public transportation to the five vocational schools for both day and evening sessions would enable many more clients to enroll in our training programs.
3. On-going support services beyond job placement is an important factor to the client. It is an enormous step for many of our clients to be enrolled in training or employed in a new job. Follow-up services help to insure that the vocational training period enabled the client to obtain gainful employment.
4. A well structured, task oriented support group that relates work and personal issues is an important component of real job readiness. It helps significantly in teaching good decision making skills.

5. Networking and information sharing as well as coordination of services are very important. Appropriate referrals to internal services and external agencies and organizations generates unobstructed pathways to success.

DISSEMINATION ACTIVITIES

Dissemenation of information about the project has been developed in numerous ways. Presentations by WJC staff members were given to parent & community organizations, local & county service agencies and radio talk shows. Four newsletters, various brochures, and WJC invitations were distributed to clients, parent and community organizations, at workshop presentations and through our mailing list of 10,000 single heads of household. T-Shirts were developed with Women's Job Center information. The T-Shirts are given to WJC clients who successfully employed after 2 month follow-up. Personal pocket calendars and organizers were printed to distributed to agencies who deal indirectly or directly with our clients. Various news releases continue to provide information and success stories of our clients.

The Women's Job Center received an award from the National Association of Counties (NACO) for innovative planning. An announcement of this award is being sent to superintendents of our 25 sending districts, advisory council members, board of education members and employees, local and county organizations and agencies, etc. Local press coverage was given to recognize the importance of such a special award. An Open House was held in October. Counselors from our twenty-five sending districts, WJC advisory committee members, directors of community and county organizations attended.

CONCLUSIONS

The Urban Job Center and Parent Outreach Center has progressed and made a statement to the local communities it serves. The center has made great stride in breaking down the stereotypical training and employment. This is only the beginning. The impact of the WJC on the single heads of households in Middlesex County has only begun. Further information about our vocational career training opportunities needs to be done. People need to know where to go for services and resources. Career planning and counseling services should be made available to the general public to help people find the many resources and opportunities that already exist in the "system" in general and the vocational system in particular.

There is a need, in preparing people to lead a productive and full life, to address the whole person, taking note of weaknesses as well as strengths, meeting the person wherever they work and encouraging self-worth. Working together with the client is very important. The Urban Job Center like its parent the vocational-technical schools, recognizes' that to do otherwise is to count failure, and makes a conscious effort to help clients to make connections for all the services they need, to build their own networks, and to learn for themselves how to use the opportunities of the system to make themselves self-sufficient.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Urban Job Center for Women and Parent Outreach Center which targets and reaches particular populations that have not had access to opportunities should extend itself to include additional population groups.

We should consider the trends of the women homemaker. As the family structure changes, women are increasing in need of becoming self sufficient for many reasons and at different ages. Many women who trained for work ten years ago and then left the work world are eager to return, however their skills are out dated or non-existant. More concern should be directed at the many target populations who want to re-enter the work force and who need vocational training.

More outreach to the community-at-large as well as particular student and parent groups would be beneficial in helping people to be more employable in a rapidly changing work world as well as helping people outside the mainstream to take a first step towards self-sufficiency, through the resources of vocational education.

Increased transportation and child care services is needed. Resources within our local and county organizations need to be better coordinated, organized and willing to network. More planning should be considered to coordinate the existing agency services and to better inform the people of the services available to them.

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